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May 9, 2005

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States House of Representatives
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Markey:

We applaud your efforts to focus more attention on the glaring hole in the United States' aviation security—lack of air cargo inspection. Rapiscan Systems develops, manufactures, installs and services the world's widest array of non-intrusive inspection systems for airports, seaports, border crossings, military installation. Currently Rapiscan Systems provides nearly half of the checkpoint security systems at U.S. airports.

Included in our portfolio of systems is an air cargo inspection system that can inspect fully-loaded cargo containers. This system is being installed at George H.W. Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, Texas and Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport in Alaska.

Containerized air cargo inspection technology exists and is being installed at U.S. airports

In the late 1980's in response to the Pan Am 103 bombing, the United States Department of Defense began development of a material-specific bomb detection technology for aviation. As a result of this effort, the Ancore Corporation (now Rapiscan Systems Neutronics and Advanced Technologies Division) developed Pulsed-Fast Neutron Analysis (PFNA) technology. PFNA can automatically detect all explosives, chemical weapons, radioactive materials, narcotics and even hazardous aviation cargo. This technology was most recently deployed to the Ysleta border crossing in El Paso, TX.

Rapiscan Systems is currently deploying two PFNA air cargo inspection systems at U.S. airports: George H.W. Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston and Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. Both of these installations are part of Transportation Security Administration programs. Similar neutron-based systems have been installed internationally, including an air cargo inspection facility at Taipei airport in Taiwan.

Containerized cargo inspection maintains current air cargo flow of commerce

While TSA and other government agencies have evaluated break-bulk cargo x-ray inspection systems (Rapiscan also manufactures these systems), only PFNA can inspect containerized cargo. The difficulty with break-bulk systems is that they require

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containerized or palletized cargo to be unpacked to inspect. This adds hours to inspection times and makes some technologies unfeasible for fast delivery air cargo.

PFNA systems inspect fully loaded cargo containers and pallets for aviation-quantity threats (established by TSA). This allows for fast inspection without unpacking. PFNA systems meet the time constraints of the air cargo environment.

Air cargo inspection can be provided with current screener corps
Another common argument against air cargo inspection is that they technologies will require hundred s of new TSA screeners to operate and inspect. Because PFNA provides automatic, material specific inspection each system only requires a single operator. And since, PFNA systems can inspect 6-10 containers per hour, most airports will only require one to two systems.

As congress debates the policy surrounding air cargo inspection, Rapiscan Systems offers to help Members and staff investigate the current availability and state of cargo inspection technologies. While cost and level of risk should factor into this debate, the question of the availability of technology to inspect air cargo has already been answered. Thank you again for your efforts to call attention to and rectify this important homeland security issue. Please let me know if Rapiscan Systems can be helpful in your continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Peter Kant
Vice President, Government Affairs

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